

1668
A
SERMON

Preach'd in the

CATHEDRAL CHURCH

OF

HEREFORD,

AT THE

ANNIVERSARY MEETING

OF THE

Three CHOIRS

GLOUCESTER, WORCESTER, HEREFORD,

September 3, 1729.

By THOMAS BISSE, D. D.
CHANCELLOR of the said CHURCH.

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ST. RAMON

Trinity in the

CATHEDRAL CHURCH

NEW FORD

THE

MINNIE



Three

GLASS

Separate

By THOMAS BISSITT, D.D.
CHANCELLOR OF THE CHURCH

LONDON:

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Z E C H. i v. 10.

For who hath despised the day of small things? For they shall rejoice and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven: They are the eyes of the L O R D, which run to and fro through the whole earth.



THE Subject of this Prophecy of *Zechariah*, which employed also the cotemporary Prophets, contained one of the greatest events that ever happened to the Jewish nation, which was the rebuilding of the Temple, with the restoration of their Polity: The completion whereof the Lord promises in the verse before my Text; *The hands of Zerub-*
B *babel*

babel have laid the foundation of this house: his hands shall also finish it. But the People measuring the improbability of this promise either from the former interruption of the building, or the present defect and disproportion of means and materials, or impotence and irresolution of the undertakers, who had begun to build, but were compelled to desist by edicts and arms, look'd upon it some with dejection of heart, others with contempt. According to what this Prophecy foretold in vision they would do, we find partly verified in the fact, That when the foundation of the house was laid, ^a *many of the Priests and Levites, and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men that had seen the first house, wept with a loud voice:* And doubtless there were many among them at the same time, and for the same reason, that mock'd at the work, and, as intimated in the Text, so continued during its suspension, the one lamenting, the other *despising, the day of such small things.*

The same discouraging treatment accompanies all worthy undertakings at their beginning. As the promoters of them generally act the wise part of *Zerubbabel* and *Joshua* with their Followers, who at laying the foundation, did to encourage the work *shout for joy*; so on the

^a Ezra iii. 12.

other hand there will be many of those, that are well-wishers to the same interest, yet causeless mourners; and of those that are not, busy mockers; equal hinderers of the best designs, the former by despondency, the latter by derision.

No wonder that this is universal fact, since it comes from the same universal enemy, that so remarkably opposed the rebuilding of the Temple. For this was that *body of Moses*, which we read ^b *the Devil contended about*, not only himself by disputing with the Angel, and *resisting* of ^c *Joshua*, but according to his old policy, by calling in upon them foreign adversaries, his publick and powerful agents, and by stirring up domestic murmurers and mockers, his secret but most effective instruments, in the hinderance of good. For tho' those *Babylonish* Governours with their companions, mentioned by *Ezra* ch. iv. 1, 8, 9. which were adversaries to their return, because planted in their room, what by drawing up false memorials, and ^d *hiring counsellours against them, to frustrate their purpose*, had power to stop the building during the reign of *Cyrus* and his two successors; yet in their whole opposition they professed to act only as enemies to the nation; where-

^b Jude Ver. 9.

^c Zech. iii. 1.

^d Ezra iv. 5.

as these native malignants were professed enemies to the work; and wrought not so much to the present cessation, as to the perpetual discredit and discouragement of the blessed enterprise.

Wherefore 'tis with, or rather against these, the Lord doth here before-hand, as preventive of their further mischief among the people, thus expostulate: *Who hath despised the day of small things?* For notwithstanding the foundation of this house might in comparison of the first seem despicable, which yet must be not for the smallness of the dimensions, but inferiority of design; and because this, as all unfinished buildings, might have a more blank and discouraging look than the former ruins, under which disadvantages it might be the subject of concern and contempt; yet the Lord comforts and certifies his people, that they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the same hand that laid the foundation, the hand of *Zerubbabel*, carrying up the building, assisted with those seven, namely, the Archangels, *Michael* with the six chief princes, who disputed with the Devil, the head-opponent, and defeated those his agents and instruments: That maugre the hostile combinations of successive Governours, and the clamours and contempts of that domestic faction, *the elders of the Jews* under *Zerubbabel* their prince,

prince, and *Joshua* the high-priest, ^e *builded and prospered through the prophecy of Zechariah: They builded and finished it according to the commandment of God, and according to this prophecy Zerubbabel did bring forth the head-stone thereof with shoutings, Ver. 7.*

Abstracting from the Subject of the Text, and to render the Discourse following more general, and thereby profitable, I shall endeavour to set before you three Observations, and to represent to you

I. The great unreasonableness and sometimes wickedness of that contempt and disregard, which are usually shewn to the beginnings of things, of all human designs, studies and undertakings. *For who* or what is he that hath thus done, *bath despised the day of small things?*

II. That such of them, as tend to promote the glory of God and good of mankind, are assisted and carried on by Divine Providence, concurring and cooperating with men, that are his chief agents therein. Thus in that greatest and best of works, the rebuilding of the Temple accompanied with the restoration of the Jewish Church and State, *Zerubbabel* with the plummet in his hand, denoting him to be

^e Ezra vi. 14.

as the architect or chief undertaker, was assisted with the seven eyes, the archangels, whom Divine Providence employs as his chief ministers unto the Sons of men in their warrantable and worthy designs.

III. That the customary contempt and disregard shewn to such designs at their beginning, are and ought to be turned into the greater rejoicing and admiration, when we behold them to prosper and to be gradually advancing. *For they shall rejoice and see, or when they see, the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel, with those seven, &c.*

I. *First*, I am to shew the great unreasonableness, and sometimes wickedness of that contempt and disregard, which are usually shewn to the beginnings of things, of all human designs, studies and undertakings. *For who hath despised, yet how many do despise, the day of small things?*

Now behold even the works of God: Have not these also had, and continue to have, their day of small things? The first of them, the making of this world and all things therein, was a gradual work. The materials and mould, the whole *being without form and void*, were prepared by the Spirit of God moving upon the face of them. And tho' God spake, and
all

all things were made, and each individual stood up in its place and perfection the moment he spake, yet the several kinds of them were made in succession, each according to its day. Thus in six days the Builder of all things is said to have^f *finished* his work, like human architects, and 'twas by time and degrees, that the Creation it self was brought to perfection. Yet we read how the angels^g *rejoiced*, when only *the foundations of the earth were laid*, yea, *they shouted for joy*, when they saw, might I borrow the figure, the plummet in the hand of the Creator, and *the line stretch'd upon it for the measures thereof*.

From which time all the productions of nature have had not only their gradual growth, but that from the smallest and invisible beginnings. As the creation of them was from nothing, so are the generations of them from principles, that are next to nothing. *Adam* indeed, the head of things created on Earth, was a perfect man the first moment he was. But all his Sons, which are formed in the womb, have their members folded up in the smallest proportions, which tho' *fashioned in continuance*, in the beginning *as yet there were none of them*. And so are all things living, that are

^f Gen. ii. 1.^g Job xxxviii. 4, 5, 7.

made for the use of man, made like unto him in the gradual manner of their generations. But was ever any found so irrational or rather impious, as to despise an infant, because such, or in the day of his smallness and infirmity? Is there not *a joy*, founded on reason as well as nature, *when a child is born into the world*: And proportionably, when any creature is brought forth?

If then in the established course of God's works, ever to be honoured, there be found the day of small things, how much more must it be expected and applauded in the works of man, who as he can do nothing without his Maker, so may be well content, if in his doings or any part of them he can imitate his Maker?

The great things and achievements found among men may be reduced to knowledge and action: To the former belong the Sciences and Arts, to the latter great Enterprizes; these as the work of mens hands, those of their understanding.

Among the Sciences I will instance in a few, whose beginnings and growth we and our fathers have seen: Tho' all those daughters of Knowledge have in their time and turn had their infancy. Let me introduce it first by remarking on language, which may be styled the cloathing
of

of Knowledge. How prodigious is the extent, variety and beauty of all languages, ancient and modern? Infomuch that the dry grammatical skill therein gives no small delight and distinction to criticks; but the artful use and application thereof in several ways, yields raptures and divinity to writers. Yet all this springs from the Alphabet, the elements of each tongue, which may be learnt and uttered by babes and parrots.

But as to knowledge itself, tho' I might exemplify in each of the Sciences, I will confine myself to three, *Mathematicks*, *Medicine* and *Musick*. I will first instance in MATHEMATICKS, a mother of the Sciences: Which notwithstanding was born, or rather born again, in the last Century: It has hardly yet reach'd its threescore years and ten; yet behold how it hath spread itself into all the branches of Philosophy! The doctrine of numbers or *Arithmetick*, which before that period sat among the mean and mercenary Arts, hath exalted itself into a partnership with *Geometry*. That which was confined almost to shops and merchandise, now deals in, and plays with the doctrine of INFINITES, opening its various power in a thousand instances, which in the age before being demonstrated but

in ^h one, struck the world with astonishment.

How dark was the day, the day surely of small things with *Astronomy*, when this *Earth*, a speck or spot of the Universe, was made the center of it; and the firmament, with the sun, moon and stars, forced or fancied to roll round about us every day? But since the COPERNICAN Scheme, which fixes the Sun in the center, and turns out this Earth among the Planets, the demonstrable, yea visible scheme of God, was discovered in a late century, how has Astronomy enlarged its bounds, took the Comets, those seeming outlaws of Nature, into its cognizance and command! Not only fixing the routs and stations of the heavenly Bodies, but measuring their magnitudes, and what is more amazing, their densities: So that the qualities, as well as quantities of the Planets, tho' distant so many thousands of miles, yea *thousands of thousands*, are newly brought within the limits of demonstration.

A like discovery, and with like effects, hath in these latter days happen'd in the *little* world, as in the *great*, I mean the microcosm of the Body. The circulation of the blood, and the motion (why not circulation?) of the Earth,

^h *Torricellius*, de Solido Hyperbolico, printed 1644.

came into the world like twins, being nearly the birth of the same age. But was it not a day of small things also with MEDICINE, when the circulation of this perpetual fountain of life was rejected, writ against, and arraigned, as an heterodoxy in Physick? And Anatomy was not allowed to be impanelled for its trial, being in those days looked upon as under the *legal* infamy and interdict of butchery: Yet from that discovery which drew on many, such has been the growth of that Profession, that Empiricks now talk freely of those mystic points, which *Hippocrates* and *Galen* never guessed at. Yea the Physician hath let our own eyes *see our substance yet being imperfect*, and in his books *are all our members written*, with their connexions and offices: And that circulation of the blood, which had been hid from man above five thousand years, and the mention of it foolishness to our grandfathers, is now laid open to us with every channel and capillary communication leading from and returning to the heart, that central Reservoir, where the *wheel labours at the cistern*. If we appear'd *fearfully and wonderfully made*, when we knew it not; how much more, now we are let into the mysteries of our composition? And as it was astonishing to reflect, that what man felt in himself every moment, should pass so

long undiscovered; so 'tis almost as astonishing to remark, that hence so many thousand secrets of our make should be disclosed in so few years.

You'll pardon me on this occasion, for taking in my third instance of this kind, and the last I proposed, which is *Musick*. Should I go back to its famed original, alas! what the Poets have celebrated and immortalized, the austerity of Criticism hath unsung and defecrated. *Orpheus*, who with his attractive harp drew beasts, woods and rocks to his audience, is represented by no small ⁱ Judge, as no other or better than a common Performer at a rural Festival, the admiration of the Crowd, the inhabitants of the villages, woods and mountains, and resembling their abodes in roughness and insensibility. If we resolve it into its natural elements, how incredibly small is the compass of it; the whole springing from the *Octave*, as language from the Alphabet?

Harmony indeed, like Statuary, Painting and the other nobler arts, hath its periods, its infancy, maturity, and declensions; all which may be bounded by a Century: This variation happening to these arts according to the degrees of public encouragement, as growth to some

ⁱ Dr. Wallis, Philof. Transf. n. 243.

plants,

plants, according to the warmth of the climate. Nay in this age the very form and fashion of Musick hath passed away ; so that what we in our own days admired, is already gone off as antiquated ; and if we speak of it with reverence, it is as we speak of the dead : But the modern or the present alone, like the living, is received with admiration.

Let us carry our observation from the Sciences and Arts, those works and testimonies of the understanding, to Societies and public Bodies, which have been formed and founded to carry on not only the Former, but also great enterprizes and works for the honour and benefit of mankind.

Now Nations themselves are but great Corporations, which tho' magnificent as they are, who can say what they were ? 'Tis as difficult to trace up States to their originals, as it is great rivers to their heads ; and if we could, 'twould be as little to their advantage, seeing they too, like rivers, spring from very small and obscure fountains, and what is worse, sometimes from ignoble ones : Not from that imaginary one, a state of war ; but from what suggested to that Author his unnatural hypothesis, robbery, piracy, and that more colourable species of vi-

* Hob's

olence

olence, invasion: A remark, I own, without my purpose; because tho' the day of weak things be not, the day of wicked things is truly despicable. *Rome* itself, whose power and glory extended over the habitable world, derived its pedigree from an exiled Colony: And those authors, who have laboured to set it off in the fullest magnitude, do it from the comparative meanness of its beginning, shewing how the buildings of that City and the members of that Empire, year by year were enlarged, when as yet there were none of them; and *Rome*, that prodigy among the nations, lay in embryo. Like have been the beginnings of all modern Empires, with their imperial cities, as also of the present Kingdoms and Republics; most of which have been but as colonies sent or grown out from that huge Body, or rather are as fragments parcell'd out from it upon its dissolution: Which notwithstanding are so far from despising, that they all boast their origine to be out of those ruins: Yet being ruins, great as they were, they are as justly to be counted inferior to any new, tho' small, model of Government, as a dead giant is to any new-born infant.

But within these national bodies there are many political bodies, companies or societies, which resemble them too in their gradual rise
and

and enlargement, but with a visible difference and disproportion according to the nature and design of their institution. Those, the declared intention whereof has been to promote the secular interests of men, as navigation, commerce, and the like, tho' lesser projections, have grown up like men, with slowness, tending and difficulty, and like them too, if not well or wisely constituted, have gone off at once, as by sudden death, or sunk away by decay; so that one age has buried the name of the Project and Projector in oblivion. Whereas other Societies, that were founded to promote the interests of truth and religion, which are the interests of Heaven, have as from nothing *increased with the increase of God.*

Some of these Bodies, such are the COLLEGES for Learning, being built and endowed by their Founders, grew not, but appeared in full perfection at their opening; like *Adam* in his full stature, the hour of his creation. Benefactors indeed have added to their income and ornament, but not altered their institution. But tho' the individual Foundations were completed at once, yet they so far resembled natural births, that they were brought forth in succession: So that the mother of them all, the ¹ UNIVERSITY, which now as a mother

¹ *Oxford.*

glories

glories in the number of her children, a few centuries back saw the day of small things, when she brought forth as her first-born, a single College; a great thing in those days of her beginning, and the work of a great ^m King: Yet was it chiefly such, in that it was an earnest from above of greater, and as *the first fruits of her increase*. And such hath it proved to Her, as also to her Sister UNIVERSITY; enjoying the like blessing from her beginning. Whether God hath sent them their full compliment, or may continue to them the same blessing, even the blessing of *Sarah* in this their age, which hath been *called barren*; yet may all those they have already brought forth be so blessed, that not one of them may henceforth see declension or infertility.

But to come still nearer to my design, I observe of Societies, whereof Charity hath laid the foundation or chief corner-stone, that the growth of these, both in swiftness and extent, hath exceeded all former proportions.

To pass by those Associated to promote our CHARITY-SCHOOLS, the work and wonder of our own time; let us come to that renewed SOCIETY, incorporated “for the relief of the
“ widows and orphans of the poorer Clergy”.

^m *University College* founded by King *Alfred*, 872.

This was begun by our Fathers escaped out of the universal wreck of the REBELLION: Who in remembrance of their brethren that escaped not, and in compassion to their widows and children, met together a few of them weekly to begin and to give into a fund for the relief of a few. This voluntary communication of friends, when known abroad, soon grew up into this mighty Corporation, established with a Charter, Laws and Offices. And the Collection, which might at first be contained in a scrip or poors-box, is now received into a Treasury. And the celebration of its annual Festival, of which this our day of rejoicing is an exact resemblance in smaller proportion, fills our *Jerusalem* with admiration and joy. For to this multitudes out of every Tribe flow together, to rejoice with, and over the House of *Levi*, for this great blessing of the Lord, wherewith six hundred of their widows are annually fed, and many of their sons and daughters have successively been brought up and happily planted in the world. Should this Charity, which tho' running, or rather strained at first as from a little cruise, hath once abounded, so as to overflow the limits of its firstⁿ Charter, fill up

ⁿ The first Charter allowed the Corporation to receive or purchase to the value of 2000 *l. per Annum*, the present of 5000 *l.*

again the content of its present, tho' enlarged to above a double capacity, a thousand widows might thence share a like annual distribution. Why should we limit, where God hath blessed? For as the same Divine blessing, communicated by *Elisba*, caused the pot of oil to increase for the relief of the Prophet's widow and two Sons, whom ° *the creditor demanded for bondmen*, never ceasing, till *all the vessels were filled*, sufficient not only to discharge the debt, but to *set aside* for their future maintenance: So why may not this Charity still multiply, being towards the same objects, the widows and orphans of our Prophets; till the income being proportion'd to their numbers and necessities, the increase thereof, as of the oil, be *stayed*, and no further Charter be desired?

I have shewn this Incorporate Society, so blessed of the Lord, in the fuller view; in that our present Society is ambitious some way to be resembled to it, tho' but in part, or rather miniature. The grand and whole design of that was charity, and surely of the noblest species. And tho' it was ordained to wipe away tears, and to silence the cries of the widow and fatherless; yet the celebration of its anniversary

Feast, a day of great things, is kept in the Temple with worship and thanksgiving, and the voice of melody, accompanied with *musical instruments, and that of all sorts*. The promotion of sacred Harmony, which serves daily in the Sanctuary, thereby to set forth the glory of God, to the greater delight and dignity of his holy Service in earthly Choirs, and which become to that Festival a proper additional ornament, accepted of God and men, the promotion I say of *Church-musick*, was the original design of our Meeting, antecedent to other additions. But as all human designs, however praise-worthy, and wherever executed, receive not only an improvement, but a sort of consecration, from charity; so those designs which are of themselves in a manner hallowed and promoted also in an holy place, among which Ours may be ranked, are more hallowed and advanced by the mixture of charity, even as the Sacrifices themselves under the Law *were all seasoned with salt*. Philosophy has taught us, that most things in nature have a salt imbodyed in their composition. The bowels of the Earth, and waters of the Sea, abound with this elementary ingredient, to render them sweet and serviceable. Thus Religion hath taught us, that as “ all our doings without “ charity, are nothing worth”, so likewise,

that charity will assimilate to, and incorporate with all our doings, above all with our acts of piety; in these its mixture, making not an addition, but union. So that charity being joined to our first design, gives it a more becoming appearance, as well as a sweet-smelling favour.

In one thing our Society hath a perfect resemblance to that Greater, that it sprang too from a very small and accidental origine. It was in like manner, a fortuitous and friendly proposal between a few Lovers of harmony, and brethren of the correspondent Choirs, to commence an anniversary visit, to be kept in turn: Which voluntary instance of friendship and fraternity, was quickly strengthen'd by social compact: And afterwards being blessed and sanctified by a Charity-collection, with the word of exhortation added to confirm the whole, it is arrived to the figure and estimation, as ye see this day.

Let us now stop and take a review of the various instances produced, sufficient, I trust, to enforce the expostulation of the Text. For seeing all that is great and glorious not only in Nature, as all things are, being the workmanship of God; but also in the ways and doings of men, in knowledge, in language, in government, in society; seeing all this hath arisen
from

from the smallest beginnings, whoſo deſpiſeth any deſign or enterprize of men from the littleneſs and meaneſs of its firſt appearance, whilſt it lies under the day and diſadvantage of ſmall things, diſcovers a great unreaſonableneſs or perverſeneſs of judgment, and that he is either a weak or wicked man; that either he has made no obſervation on things about him, or has took that fatal turn, to make a mock at every thing.

But to cloſe this head, with regard to our Society in its preſent ſituation, tho' we expect no great advance, we may juſtly hope for continuance. There are public Meetings, that can hardly be ſaid to have any public ends; yet theſe have had ſome of them their circular days, ſome their immemorial Anniverſaries; wherein tho' Religion ſhares not, nor appears, it gives no diſcountenance. If the world condemns them not, neither doth that condemn them. But in this our anniverſary Aſſembling Religion may be ſaid to have not ſo properly a ſhare, as the ſole intereſt. Piety laid the foundation, and Charity hath built thereupon. The promotion of both is found in the groundwork, and in the ſuperſtructure. The day of ſmall things, at which the Deſpiſer might caſt his ſmiles, or ſhoot the tongue, is ſome time paſſed. The day of rejoicing hath come on,
and

and every year increased. For we have seen the Design to prosper, without any known objection or obstacle from men, and therefore we presume, not without the approbation and assistance of the Divine blessing. When Piety and Charity have the plummet in their hands, surely the seven eyes are with them in the building. Which brings me to shew under my second head,

2dly, That such works, designs or enterprizes, as tend to promote the glory of God, and the good of mankind, are assisted and carried on by Divine Providence concurring and co-operating with men, that are his chief agents herein. Thus in the rebuilding of the Temple, attended with the restoration of the Jewish Church and State, *Zerubbabel* with the plummet in his hand, denoting him to be as the architect or chief undertaker, was assisted by the seven eyes, the Archangels, whom Divine Providence employs as his chief ministers, and men in their warrantable and worthy designs.

But first let me make a brief remark upon the mystical number, SEVEN; a number, which God, the maker and ordainer of all things, hath observed, not only in his ordinances recorded in his word, but, what is more, in the greatest of his creatures, visible and invisible.

This

This number is legibly written in the volume of Nature, as well as of Scripture. Why? But from both to remind us of the original work of the Creation, made in six days, and crowned with the seventh, which was hallowed for a perpetual Sabbath in remembrance thereof.

We read here of the seven eyes, the number of the Archangels, which are declared in the *Revelation* ^p to be the seven Spirits of God. These are there represented also, by the seven Lamps, that burnt before the Throne. We see likewise, in the great visible temple of the Firmament, how God hath in this also placed only seven lamps, the Sun with the six Planets; those ^q primary, and, as it were, princes among the heavenly Bodies.

Let us descend to this Earth, one of the seven, and with wonder contemplate how in that glorious apparel with which God hath cloathed all things visible, namely, variety of colours, there are but ^r seven original colours; out of which

^p Rev. v. 6.

^q Our Moon, and those about *Jupiter* and *Saturn*, are called *Secondary Planets*.

^r Which are these, and counted in this order, *red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet*. These, if imitated in Paint, and mixed together in equal quantities, make a *White*. And thus being united in the Sun's rays, they make *Light*; which

which Light, the first of God's works, was compounded, and into which it may be resolved, and no farther.

But above all, let us admire, that also sounds, the ground-work of harmony, which is the quintessence of them, are confined to the number of ^s seven *notes*.

Tho'

which may be artificially separated into those seven colours by a Prism, as it is naturally in the rainbow. *Sir Isaac Newton's Opticks.*

* For the Scale of Musick consists only of seven Notes repeated, which are set down by the first seven Letters of the Alphabet, *A, B, C, D, E, F, G*, and so again, *A, B, &c.* all which Notes are unisons to their respective sevenths; *A* to *A*, *B* to *B*, &c. And being, as they are term'd, Unisons, that is, of one sound, or tone, they may be counted as one or the same Note: And therefore may be well enough called *the Seven Notes*, as repeated continually upon the Scale, the return or cycle of which, begins after every Seventh. Now when any two of these corresponding in each cycle, as *A* and *A*, *B* and *B*, are struck or sounded together, they are called *octaves*, or *eighths*, taken inclusively, tho' the one be but the seventh note distant, or counted from the other: Just as the day of Circumcision was called the eighth day, including the day of the birth, from which it was but the seventh. For if the Child was born on the Sabbath, he was circumcised the Sabbath following. Thus the Sabbaths and the Octaves (so called) are placed at the same intervals; For example, let the *Sunday* begin the month, being on the 1st day; the 2^d *Sunday* will be the 8th day, the 3^d the 15th, the 4th the 22^d. the 5th the 29th; which 29th day is the beginning of a new week. Thus let the first note, be it *A, B, C*, or any other, be made the Unison or first *Key* counted on the Harpsichord, the *Octave* will be on the 8th *Key*, the next
on

Tho' therefore I firmly believe the mosaical account of the Creation, because it is written; yet because it is also countenanced and confirmed by these wondrous correspondencies in Nature, I more gladly believe.

Now this observation on the number of original sounds, being a peculiar memorial to the sons of harmony of the Creation, of the six days work, and the Sabbath annexed, let me enlarge, or rather explain myself on this pleasing analogy. Behold then, how it hath pleased the Creator to place and establish his holy Sabbaths at the same intervals in the calendar of our time, as he hath the *Octaves* in the scale of harmony. For as these inclose the six notes above and below, that below, which is termed *Unison*, rendering those of the six *notes* most harmonious, that most accord with it;

on the 15th, the next on the 22^d, the next on the 29th; which 29th, being an octave to the 22^d, and so taken inclusively, may seem to belong to that octave, yet in reality is the beginning of another cycle of the seven notes above. Therefore if this 29th be discounted from the foregoing notes, because belonging to the following, there remain only 28 notes for the 4 Octaves so called, that is, seven notes for each: Just as the 29th day of the month being deducted in the fore-mention'd case, because the beginning of the week following, there remain 28 days, for the 4 weeks preceding, *viz.* 7 days for each week, $4 \times 7 = 28$. So that the cycle or compass of Musical notes or tones, is limited to seven.

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and such of them as accord less, the *Octave* above immediately covering and reconciling their dissonancy: And as these six *notes* thus inclosed and divinely ordered, comprehend all Musick; which, whether ascending or descending, is but a repetition of *Octaves*, each containing the same variety, or rather identity, of *notes*, as the whole *Scale*: So hath God ordained his Sabbaths to inclose our six days of labour, to sanctify and sweeten them to us; by which order the Sabbath foregoing communicates blessing and delight to such of the week-days as can be employed most suitably to it; and of those, which are passed in toil and trouble, the Sabbath following soon relieves their harshness and disquietude. Thus together, if rightly ordered, they compose the harmony of our time on earth; which, if measured either way, ascending from infancy to age, or reverting from that extream to the first point of life, is but a series of a few weeks repeated, thus blessed, and, as it were, *barr'd* by the intervention of the Sabbaths, and set off to us, one after another, and one like another, upon the scale of life.

But from this digression, if such, not unsuitable to the subject, nor, I trust, disagreeable to this Auditory, let us turn our contemplation

plation back to the mysterious œconomy of Divine Providence, which hath ordained the holy Angels, constituted under seven chief Princes, the Archangels to be his Ministers in the Government of the world.

We know, that ever since the world was made, God worketh all things in Nature by the mediation of *second* causes, each thing in its subordination performing the office, which the Creator appointed it. Thus in the moral world, as in the natural, God, the Creator and Governour of mankind, is pleased to employ the intermediate ministries of Angels, as his secondary agents, in the government of it; to whom Scripture gives great titles, and assigns diverse orders.

An infinity lies between God and us, not as a mere void or blank. No, the Creator, who hath made an innumerable series of visible creatures in a continued descent below mankind, the bounds whereof none hath searched out, hath above us likewise placed orders of creatures invisible, which no man can count, of Angels ascending up one order above another, terminating in the supreme order of Archangels, to whom is committed the rule and, as it were, military direction over all the Angelic hosts, and the privilege

or ^t birthright to stand and minister in the presence of God.

We behold in human Governments a prime Ministry. These have Access unto the Sovereign to go in and out before him: These too are his Eyes, sent out thro' the whole Kingdom: And by their Intelligence he inspects, and by their Subservience orders the Affairs of his Dominion. Were the number of these prime Rulers seven in our modern Governments, did all Sovereigns form their Court after the Model of the *Persian*, which had *seven^u Princes, that saw the King's Face, and sate first in his Kingdom,* they would then represent the Heavenly Court, in which the seven prime Angels, Rulers over the rest, stand in the Presence of God, and are his Eyes, that run to and fro through all the Kingdoms of the Earth.

We are encouraged to hope, that the same God is pleased to regard and delight in the Services of us Men, though made so much lower than the Angels, though too our Services be full of Imperfection, and our best

^t They are styled by *Clemens Alexand.* *πρωτόγονοι ἀγγέλων ἀρχόντες*, first-begotten, or first-born Princes of the Angels. *Strom.* 6.

^u Esther i. 14.

Actions nearer to Disobedience than Duty. *Lord what is Man, yea the best of Men, that thou hast such a Respect unto him?* How much more, infinitely more, must he delight in the Services of Angels, constituted in a wonderful Order? Wherein also there is no Defect, no Demur, but an absolute Correspondence to the Command, and utmost Zeal in the Execution of it. What is swifter than the Motion of the Eye? Yet in these Eyes of the Lord this Motion is accelerated; *they run to and fro*, and that *through the whole Earth*.

Thus are these seven the principal Instruments of God's Providence in the Government of all earthly Dominions, being sent into all the Earth; whereas 'tis a rational Conjecture, that the subordinate Orders have their limited Charges over Empires, Kingdoms, Principalities and Republicks, to which their correspondent Titles, of *Thrones, Dominions, Principalities* and *Powers*, yield some Countenance, though not Confirmation. But 'tis more than Conjecture, that whatever Power or Influence the supreme and subordinate Angels have in the Kingdoms of this World, it is all in Subservience to and for the Help of God's Elect planted or scattered in them. If these Eyes of the Lord run to and fro through all the Earth, it is because from one End of
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it to the other, are the Dispersions of *Israel*. We find in the Instance before us, how *Gabriel*, (an Archangel, for *he*^x *stands in the Presence of God*) was sent to *Daniel*, under his deep Distress and Humiliation; whilst three whole Weeks he made his Prayer and Supplication with Fasting and Sackcloth, and Ashes *y* for the holy Mountain of his God, viz. the Restoration of his Temple; to comfort him, *Gabriel* not only tells him the Time of its Accomplishment, but that he himself laboured it with the Prince of *Persia*, *who withstood him* the whole Time of *Daniel's* Humiliation; and that during the Conflict he had remaining with the Kings of *Persia*, *z* *Michael* came to help him: And that now he return'd *a* to fight with the Prince of *Persia*. Whatever these Sayings may import, what Resistance these spiritual Princes may find, or what Influence they may have, in the Courts and Councils of earthly Sovereigns, for they fight not with Arms, nor persuade with Eloquence; thus much is evident, that these two Archangels *b* stood and fought for *Daniel's* People under the Kings of *Persia*: and for the same reason we may judge, that they went with them from the first, and remained and acted

^x Luke i. 19. ^y Dan. ix. 20. ^z Ch. x. 13. ^a *ŷ*. 20.
^b Ch. xii. 1.

in the Court of *Babylon*, and all to carry on the Interests of *Sion*.

But to come to the true *Israel* of God, and his real Temple the Church of *Christ*, the Archangels seem to have the peculiar Charge and Oversight thereof conferred on them by the Lord of it; to whom, upon his Ascension, all the heavenly Powers were put in Subjection, and he was made Head over them, and all Things, but that *to* and for *the^c Church which is his Body*. But the Archangels were made subject in such manner, that they are represented not as put under, but united to this head. St. *John* in his Vision, *Rev. v. 6.* saith, *I saw in the midst of the throne a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven Eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, sent out into all the earth*; the Eyes to signify their superintendence, and the Horns their power. By the might of these horns he defends his Church, and by the vigilance of these eyes he directs its affairs. We read also in this vision of *Zachary*, that these ^d *seven eyes were upon one stone, which Zerubbabel had laid for the foundation of the Temple, the type of that stone, elect and precious, hereafter to be laid in Zion, for the foundation of the*

^c Ephes. i. 20.

^d Ch. iii 9.

Church. And to make the charge of this stone, never to be removed, inseparable from their office, they were upon it as a thing graven, and the *Lord of Hosts* would himself engrave the graving thereof.

Whether this be the interpretation of these visions or near it, without controversy great is the mystery of godliness in this one revelation concerning the Archangels, as to their number and station above in the presence of the most High, so their special ministry in and to his Church militant on Earth ; yet revealed beyond all controversy : and that not only mystically and in visions, but expressly in the writings of St. *John* and St. *Paul*, both implying the same truth, speaking nearly the same words. St. *John* salutes the seven Churches with a most solemn benediction from their ministry: *Grace be to you, and peace from him which was, and is, and is to come, and from the seven Angels, which are before the throne, and from Christ Jesus the faithful witness*: That is, grace and peace from the eternal God, as the author to give ; from the Archangels, as the instruments to convey, and from *Christ Jesus* as the Mediatour to procure those blessings. Not less solemn is

that adjuration of *Paul* to *Timothy*, to keep to the directions and canons there given for the government of the Church, *I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect Angels, that thou observe these things.* Which are those Elect, but the seven exalted above the rest, to have the particular oversight and guardianship over the Church of *Christ*? Who as such must be supposed to have a particular and strict regard to the acts and care of those, to whom the like charge is committed, and in reference to which the same title is given, of being the Angels of their Churches; that these act and behave as under the awe of their heavenly inspectors, and like them be vigilant in their government, as Eyes running to and fro, and above all upright, as Eyes unprejudiced, beholding and *doing nothing with partiality.* This is a glorious contemplation, whereon if we have stayed a little, (and a more transient view *had been none*) yet we have *not intruded into things* we knew not: And where Revelation hath drawn aside the veil, 'tis our duty as well as delight to look into the oracle.

But will we hence conclude, or rather can we at all conceive, that these Beings, which

are as gods among the gods above, and far above all that were called gods on earth, should be sent forth to minister to the sons of men, to watch over, attend and assist them even in their best Actions and Interests? Their condescension may reach indeed to the general and momentous concerns of the Church, to strengthen its foundations, to repair its breaches, and to set up its battlements. When a *Zerubbabel* hath the plummet in his hand, then the seven Eyes may be with him. But in this natural and just veneration of the Angels, we consider not that the Lord of them and us thought it no diminution to come down to minister unto us, and to die for our Salvation; and that what he did for all Men, he did as much for one man; and as much for the least of men, as for the greatest. God's thoughts of greatness and diminution are not as our thoughts; nor do the ways of his heavenly ministers, as our ways, admit of the mean notions of place and precedence. Nay, may not their *Scale* of Honour be inverted, and graduated downwards, measuring Greatness by Condescension; so, that according to our Lord's precept and pattern, he that is *greatest among them*, shews himself such by becoming *as the least*; and the Eminence of an Archangel may be manifested

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more by his ministring unto men, than by commanding of Angels? This we are assured, that they are all, Archangels therefore as well as Angels, *sent forth to minister unto them, who are heirs of salvation.* The great thing to be attended to by us is, that they minister only unto the heirs, not to such as are aliens, much less such as are adversaries to the covenant of Christianity. Let us be careful to be number'd among the former: and we need not doubt, but God hath *given his Angels charge* concerning each of us, how little we and our concerns may be, or seem to be, *to keep us in all our ways*, that are lawful, and to assist us in all that are laudable. The Seer *Hanani* of old time could declare, that by *these eyes of God* & *running to and fro through the whole earth*, He shewed himself strong in the behalf of them, *whose heart is perfect towards him.*

What then shall we say? Hath this been the doctrine and belief under the old as well as new Covenant, that every good man, that is the servant of God, *whose heart is perfect towards him*, hath his Angel to attend, succour and assist him in all his private interests, doings and designs? Have we not then rather,

when as a body of men, we are joyn'd in any public, especially in any pious design? When in good works men are fellow-labourers, then we may conclude, their angels are fellow-helpers: There are those eyes of the Lord with them.

But what tendency have these sayings? Will I presume to bring in those celestial Beings, as auxiliaries and copartners to this our Meeting, and to our small mutable undertaking? And why not? If our assembling this day hath not the countenance and concurrence of the Divine favour, what do we here in the house of God? Let us depart hence and disband in confusion. But we are not ashamed of what we are about, or as unbeseeming the place where we stand: There is nothing we do out of it, that goes for nothing: there is no neutrality or indifference with God, touching what we do in common life, either in the house, in the field, or in the city, but he either assists or prevents us in the doing; and this not only inwardly by the workings of his grace, but also outwardly by the ministries of his angels. Thus we read and thus believe. Surely then what we do when assembled in his Sanctuary, we therefore do it, or ought to do with the greater care, as *St. Paul* cautions us, *because of the Angels.*

Angels. And if they be specially present, are they here only as Spectators, unconcern'd or unemployed? Part of their ministry in the heavenly sanctuary is to play before the throne with their golden harps; singing the song to the Lamb, the same song we sing below. If they delight to mingle with and to minister unto men in any of their works or services, it must be most in such, as have a similitude and symphony with their own.

By what method and in what ways the Angels minister unto us, assisting and co-operating with us in religious or common actions, in our private or public undertakings, we read not; and I believe it impossible to be made known to us in this mortal state; wherein we know not, how our own souls minister to our bodies, how our spirit actuates this flesh, moves, directs, or stops its motions. That our souls, which are spirit, thus act in and upon our bodies, we feel by experience: That the Angelic spirits minister unto us, assisting, influencing and restraining us in our ways, we learn from revelation. Blessed are those, who believing have experience added to their belief. But I must hasten to my last head, which is to remind you,

III dly, That the customary contempt and disregard shewn to human designs at their beginning,

ginning, are and ought to be turned into the greater rejoycing and admiration, when we behold them to prosper, and to be gradually advancing. Who hath despised the day of small things? *For they shall rejoyce and see, or when they see, the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven.*

As to the instance before us, this observation may be seen better in the figure, than in the letter. For *Zerubbabel*, in rebuilding the temple, did in this prophecy visibly prefigure the Messiah, *the man whose name is the Branch, who^h should grow up out of his place, and he, even he, should build the temple of the Lord.*

This man, the Branch and root of *David*, did grow up out in his place, but in so great obscurity, that on account thereof no man was ever so *despised and rejected of men*. The day of his whole life was a day of small things; the beginning of it being a day of the utmost diminution, the ending of it a day of seeming extinction. Yet all this tended to encrease the joy and glory of that day, whereon ⁱ *the same stone which the builders thus refused, was made the head stone in the corner.* This was *the day*, the day of his resurrection, *which the Lord had made for men to rejoyce*

^h Zec. vi. 8.

ⁱ Psal. cxviii. 22.

and be glad in. Indeed after this foundation was laid, there followed a cessation also of this building; after that joyful day, a blank interval, till the descent of the *Holy Ghost*, the Comforter; by whose incitation, more prevalent than that of all the Prophets, the work was resumed, *went on fast and prospered* with rejoycings and astonishment. For they now saw the plummet in the hand of the Apostles, the master-builders of the Church; God visibly *working with them*, and his Eyes, the Angels, personally assisting them, and contending with the Dart with far greater Zeal about this body of *Christ*; insomuch that the successive adversaries he stirred up, persecuting Emperors, could not suppress the builders; nor the *counsellors he hired against them*, learned hereticks, *frustrate their purpose*; but there were great rejoycings in those days, whilst the Church was in building, tho' mixed with cries and contention; even as in beginning of this typical building of *Zerubbabel*, the noise of weeping was drowned in the loudness of shouting. But then upon the finishing of the Temple, as the *Jews* kept their Feast with full joy; ^k *for the Lord had made them joyful, by turning the heart of the king of As-*

^k Ezra vi. 22.

syria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God; so was the rejoycing of the Christians every where filled up upon the conversion of the ¹Emperor, by whom their hands were strengthen'd, and the settlement of the Church accomplish'd. Such adorable analogies were there from the beginning to the end of this great design of God, carried on, as we have seen, by Men and Angels; by whose services, ordained in a wonderful subordination, from weak things, were brought forth mighty; and from base things, and things that were despised, were brought forth honourable; and things most opposed and afflicted, came forth victorious, with the crown of rejoycing.

But to bring our observation to men, and the common state of things, we find, that smallness and obscurity of original, which the rich and the great are so apt to contemn, and all to disregard, have been to good men the peculiar subject of their thanksgiving to God, and is always the most rational subject of glorying among men. Noble was that reflection of the Father of the Patriarchs *Jacob*: '*with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now am I become two bands*: Divine was

¹ Constantine.

ⁿ Gen. xxxii. 10.

that expostulation of *David*, the head of the Prophets: ⁿ *Who am I, and what is my House, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* The indistinction of the family in *Israel* magnified the exaltation of the Son to the throne of it. And as it was the greatest glory to *David*, so was it his chief theme of thanksgiving to God, that he had ^o *taken him away from the sheepfold, not from the Court, to feed Israel his People.*

Now when from privacy men become public persons, as their lives, like *David's*, may be worth ten thousand of others, so will their actions have a proportionable importance. As it is with men, so with their enterprizes. From whatever rise they commence, when they become public, the undertaking of many, they multiply their joynt interest and efficacy beyond calculation, and their good influence on the world may be worth a thousand of private benefactions. The great good that is done in the world, is done by Communities; for there union strengthens, emulation quickens, and company delights; effects which will always be found in Societies, that are founded on approved and useful intentions. On such a foundation doth this Society profess to stand at this day; which doth not bring us together to en-

ⁿ Sam. vii. 18.

^o Psal lxxviii. 70.

tertain ourselves or others, tho' that be an happy concomitant of our meeting; no, but to encourage our mutual improvement in our Offices, to promote brotherly love, and that not as among common Christians, but by a Choral and Collegiate fraternity; and being thus qualified and united, year by year to glorify God with all our might in his holy Temple, and to sanctify the whole with an offering for the offspring of them that minister'd therein. Upon these pretensions is this Society, whatever it was, now grown numerous in its Members, and more numerous in its Attendants; such as must close the Eye of Envy, and stop the Mouth of Mockery, if such there were, turning our success into admiration and applause. Wherefore let us on this day rejoyce together, that from whatever we began, tho' walking at first as *with a staff*, we are now become a great *band*. And a greater Band we may yet grow, if we continue to keep to the same ends of our assembling; whereas if we suffer one of them to fail, it will be a fatal step to, and a sad symptom of a dissolution.

Above all, let us keep up that bond of peace and perfectness, which is charity. I said Charity added to Piety resembled Salt sprinkled on the Sacrifice. The specifick Property of Salt is to preserve things from corruption: So long then

as that preservative is continued, our Society is secured; and as that abounds, its good Savour will increase. On the other hand, as salt water corrupted sends forth a poisonous scent, so nothing is so offensive to the world as corrupted Charities. When they are suffered to lie dead in the Fund, or stagnate in the trust of Communities, they are then like bilge-water gathered at the bottom of a Ship. And as it is found necessary for the safety of the ship to have such nuisance forced out at set hours, so ought public Charities to be subject to regular Visitations: For if that, which should season and sweeten all our actions, especially religious ones, should not only lose its flavour, but contract a stench, it would reduce Religion itself, being its director, to its own defecration, *to be cast out as an accomplice, and trodden under foot of men.* But our Society is not, nor can be liable to such an abomination. What has been so bountifully given, has been as faithfully distributed. Your Eyes, my Brethren, which are our annual inspectors, are a standing witness; and the mouths of those who are educated by your benevolence, are a growing witness to us, who also corroborate their evidence with benediction.

What can cut asunder or loosen the band of this fraternal Community? I see nothing that

can have such an unhappy effect, except the natural indisposition in mankind towards good works. There is nothing men are so apt *to be weary in, as well doing*: Yet no work so cheap or so easy to be done: none yields half the satisfaction to the doer. How indefatigable are men, after knowledge, after riches, after honour? Natural is the inclination, and laudable the pursuit. Yet these glorious acquisitions are all but means to one common end, and that end is doing good. All our abilities, intellectual, moral, political, are *to profit withal*; without which those abilities, as well as actions flowing from them, are nothing worth. Alas! that would be well, if they proved only unprofitable; but they will be proportionably hurtful. For as our works, unless springing of faith, have in them the nature of sin; so without Charity, the fruit of faith, knowledge hath in it the nature of folly, riches of poverty, honour of degeneracy.

I know no other end, for which I was brought upon this stage of probation, but to serve God and to do good, and thereby whilst I have time, *to lay up some foundation against the time to come*. To this end do I live, and in these hopes do I labour in that estate of life, to which it hath pleased God to call me: and when it shall please him to disable me from
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this labour, that I can do no more good, may I live no more days. What other motive brought me here, to appear and almost to expose myself now a third time upon this Occasion? I value my Quiet and my Credit as much as others. Yet the interrupting of the one, and hazarding of the other, are with me as nothing, if I can at any time or by any means promote something that is *good and profitable unto men*.

Not but I must own, that that Stoical boast on Virtue, is a true and tried saying on Charity; that it is its own reward. It brings with it an inward Complacency full of sympathizing delight; so that he that feedeth the hungry, refreshes his own bowels; he that cloatheth the naked, warms his own flesh. Or rather, this complacency is like the sensation of sounds, only to be felt; and which no man can describe to the unexperienced, any more than he can Musick to the deaf. But as frequent experiments give a quicker sense and an higher delight in all sensible enjoyments, of which, as I have elsewhere shewn, harmony is the most refined and exquisite, and justly styled *P the delight of the sons of men*; so in doing good frequency multiplies the complacency.

If I am bold in calling Charity the harmony of the soul, let the day be my apology. Yet I could shew, had I time and leave, how those entertaining parallels and proportions, which ^a *Ptolomy*, harmonious also in ingenuity, has drawn between musick and the powers and passions of the mind, do correspond in acts of Charity. For instead of that slow approbation of the understanding, assent of the will and compliance of the affections, which our other acts are forced to wait for, attending long upon their backwardness and dissention; these have the same instant, are met, yea, hastened by the concurrence of the will, applause of the understanding, and full voice and consonance of the affections: Or rather the Soul, which is the ground of and comprehends them all, and is all, like an universal unison is with all compassionate acts affected throughout, and greatly but gratefully moved; so as to communicate to the body a like pleasing sympathy and *sounding of the bowels*.

Tho' it be high time, I cannot close without a review to my beginning, and reminding you, that there is indeed a day of small things, melancholy and despicable; which is, when from great things we relapse into them.

^a Harmonicorum. lib. 3. cap. 5.

To come from the dust was no Imputation upon man; but *unto dust to return*, that was his sentence and his shame. In this thing too it is with the body social, as with the natural. Whilst it lives and is active, it is honourable; but when it comes to die, *it is also sown in dishonour*, and upon its dissolution, like a Corpse, turns into a nuisance: Which too is the greater, because this death comes not thro' the law of nature, but must be voluntary, owing to our faults or follies, and therefore somewhat resembling self-murder. And as in that case an Inquest is held upon the deceased, which if convicted, hath his body cast out into the highway, and a mark of infamy drove thro' it; so the expiration of a Society will call for a public enquiry and prosecution from the world; as having broken thro' the bands of humanity which knits men together, and of Christianity which seals and sanctifies the knot. Tho' therefore we be but a voluntary Society, held by no Legal Obligations, yet having appealed to, been approved of, and encouraged by the world, we must not think ourselves at liberty ever wholly to disunite and dissolve, without giving an offence to Religion, Society, Brotherhood, Harmony, and to all mankind, bringing not only a personal contempt upon ourselves, but a reproach upon
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the Foundations to which we belong. Nay, that peculiar happiness of an ^r equidistant situation, the envy and wish of other Choirs, which tho' wanting that happiness, have honoured us with their imitation; and which happiness probably pointed out to us this communion, will upon a disunion suggest to others a taunting proverb against us, as under some enchantment averse to harmony, by whose professed sons *a threefold chord*, so equally and so fortunately composed, could *easily*, could possibly be *broken*.

But how come I to drop in such an unreasonable damping reflection upon this day of rejoycing? not, my Brethren, from any jealousy, or with other intention, than to awaken and stir up in us all a farther Zeal and Unanimity, to hold and work together for the common interest, reputation, and establishment of that Communion we have entred into; that so, tho' the Members, being voluntary, may go off as their wills vary, or affairs require; yet by the succession of others the Society may subsist unto many Years, yea, generations; which tends to the furtherance of God's glory in the exaltation of his holy worship, to the improvement of our Choirs, the credit of our

^r *Glocester, Worcester, and Hereford*, lie in an equilateral Triangle, distant 20 Miles from each other.

Founda-

Foundations, to the benefit of our Cities, the comfort of the fatherless, to the delight of mankind, of ourselves, and of all that come nigh us. Upon these grounds it commenced, and upon these *let our brotherly love continue.* Amen.

F I N I S.



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